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than those of Caluso of Turin, and Marini and Visconti of Rome, all deceased within a few years, the last within one and a half, of Mai at Milan, de Rossi at Parma, Morelli at Venice, and Mezzofante at Bologna, it might still claim for this generation an equal division of learned fame, with almost any of the past. One superiority they may perhaps be allowed to possess, over the mass of transalpine scholars, and it is surely that, which ought to be regarded with least jealousy, the writing of Latin. Not Gessner, nor even Ruhnken (whose Dutch abridgment of Scheller is the best manual Latin dictionary) have made Forcellini, who was thought to write Latin better than any man of his day, less acceptable; and even Foscolo, though a Greek by birth, amidst the distractions of a political and military life, in these revolutionary times, has entered into the varieties of the Latin language, with the delicacy of a native; leaving you at a loss in his *Didymus*, which most to wonder at, the exactness with which, in the work itself, he has caught the ungraceful but expressive rudeness of the vulgate; or the ease with which, in the preface, he passes from the elegant fluency of Cicero to the precision of Sallust.

The volume before us closes with a complete catalogue of the published and unpublished works of the author. Of these we are happy to learn that copies of the greater part have recently been imported for the university library at Cambridge.

ART. II.—*Mississippian Scenery: a poem descriptive of the interior of North America.* By Charles Mead.

With contemplative solitude imprest
I sing the shady regions of the West.

Philadelphia, Potter & Co. 12mo, pp. 113.

THE historians inform us that a remarkable change has taken place in the business of poetry and prose.* Poetry is

* Lest we should haply be accused of plagiarism for this sentiment, we think it safe, to set down the following verse:

There was ere prose began, they say, a time,
Ere learned scribe with men had lot or part;
But fact or fable, all was told in rhyme,
And came unlearned and reached untaught the heart.
'Twas *spirit* all—high nature did impart
Her gift undelved for, wheresoe'er she chose;—
At length the *letter* came, and with it art,
The poet's race declined, the writer's rose,
Till verse itself displays sad kindred oft with prose.

the oldest of the two ; if one can believe these same historians, there was positively a time when there was nothing but poetry. History and geography, morality and law, war and love, grammar and logic, were all and equally dealt out in the poetical form. The muses got possession of the provinces, where you would least expect them—took into their hands, with equal ease, the truncheon, the ploughshare, and the sceptre, and ruled undisputed over the whole of those domains, which should be the natural and fair inheritance of plain honest prose. With the progress of mankind this was put to rights. As better notions of justice prevailed, these ambitious ladies were expelled from the territories, which they had holden to be sure from the first, rather as a derelict than a fair inheritance, and because there was no prose to put in a claim. A partition ensued ; generals and lovers, heros and fair maidens, the heart and the moon, and disinterested friendship, and dreams, and the rainbow were handed over to poetry ; while prose took charge of duty and truth, history and law, eloquence and science. This division has been kept up ever since, to the great advantage alike of the labouring writer and the labouring reader. The fancier of poesy is no longer obliged, as in the first age, to busy his mind with a thousand indigestible matter-of-fact topics ; nor is he, who deals in the substance of literature, teased with picking it out of the whipped syllabub and floating island, the trifle and the flummery of the muses. We are mistaken, however, if a disposition is not discovering itself, to violate this wholesome neutrality. Things seem to be going by degrees into the opposite extreme. Prose, who is at bottom a sly encroaching dog, seems disposed to revenge the indignities, which he suffered in the beginning from his smarter sister, and despairing of now making head against her, in the open field, is resorting to artifice and disguise. We have detected him more than once tricked out in his sister's finery—tripping along in her mincing style—and trying to pinch an air out of the corner of his lips, and so passing himself off upon honest, unsuspecting people, as the real muse. Now as this is a violation of the original articles of partition, and in itself a fraudulent, unworthy thing, we feel it our duty, as trustees of the settlement, to lay open the deceit, wherever we find it. It is incumbent therefore on us to inform our readers, that the work before us is but a new instance of these frauds, which are getting but

too common among us. Notwithstanding the word *Poem* on the title page, and the capital letters at the beginning of all the lines, and the rhymes at the end of some of them, we assure the lovers of poetry, that it is a sham ; and either a fraud, or as we are more charitably inclined to think, a waggery on the part of their shrewd old friend *Prose*.

If this were indeed only an honest piece of waggery, we should let it pass, without rapping our sly old acquaintance over the knuckles. But inasmuch as several of our best friends have sunk a good deal of capital, in filling their shelves, by way of ornament, with books under the name of poetry, which have turned out, in the end, to be only prose plated, we have resolved, once for all, to give them a few rules, by which they may almost always detect the counterfeit. If, however, any case should occur in which, notwithstanding these our rules, they are unable to decide, they have only to send the article in question to our bureau, postage paid, and may rely on having it decided upon gratis.

First, The real, genuine poetry is modest, select, chastised : she chooses no glaring, vague, and undefined field to show herself in ; but fixes on some one deep affection, strong passion, exalted idea, lovely or dreadful scene, or marked character, and exhausts her whole soul in adorning that. This is the beautiful secret of *unity*, which the pedants of the Alexandrian or Parisian school have eternally enforced, and never understood ; thinking to find it in time, and place, and action, when it was to be sought in the spirit, character, and soul, if we may so say, of the subject. *Prose*, on the other hand, is a most gluttonous fellow ; he will submit to no such limits : he will forsooth write you a history of two thousand years, or insist upon your letting him talk to you, through fifty folios of Reports, from the Conquest, down.—This is a sure characteristic ; and one by which you may detect him here. *Mississippian* scenery, indeed ! None of your Troys or your *Æneases* ; none of your Wyomings, a single village on the Susquehanna ; none of your Windsor Forests, or your Loch Katrines, for him. Nothing but the Mississippi, from New Orleans to the Lake of the Woods, with proportionate digressions for the Ohio and the Missouri.

But when he begins to treat his subject, honest *Prose* shows the cloven foot still plainer. The muses, of course, with all the little sylphs and beauties of their train take flight, the

first moment he shows himself. He gives chace to them to be sure, and would overtake and press them into his service, but he seldom succeeds in seizing any thing, beyond a capital letter or two, which he puts up like a lying sign-post before a country inn—and a few limping rhymes, too lame to escape from him, in the flight of the rest of the poetical train. This class of rhymes abounds in the work before us. *Smiles* and *wilds*, pp. 13, 15, 26, 38, twice p. 39, 42, and 57; *stream* and *unseen*, pp. 14, 27; *way* and *sea*, p. 15; *rear* and *air*, p. 17; *prowl* and *stroll*, p. 18; *attire* and *there*, p. 19; *shores* and *bow'rs*, p. 22; *shore* and *fire*, p. 23; *spread* and *shade*, p. 23; *winds* and *shines*, p. 24; *winds* and *designs*, p. 100; *shore* and *tow'r*, p. 26; *shores* and *wars*, p. 100; *reign* and *plains*, p. 29; *roam* and *own*, p. 48; with others equally decrepit, show what a poor huntsman Prose is, even of this smallest sort of poetic game. Then, too, his cruelty to the poor creatures, when once taken; instead of fulfilling their office once, and then being allowed to run again, he keeps them at the task, till they are fairly worn down.—*Skies* and *rise*, in the course of the poem, are made to do duty fifteen times; *floods* and *woods* no less than ten; and *smiles* and *wilds*, in plain violation of the ceremonial law against ploughing with animals unlike, are most unrighteously yoked together on eight several occasions.

But mere capital letters and rhymes, especially such ill-assorted ones, would not, of course, suffice so resolute a dissembler as Prose. It is *words*, that help him out with the rest of his disguise; idle, feeble, high sounding, misplaced words, that stun the ear and mean nothing. He does not so much as dream that words, to be of any use, must be appropriate and expressive; he heaps them up, and strings them together, and crowds them on, and bears you down with them, as a clever general puts his ragamuffins in the van, to fill up a trench with their carcasses. Thus in the poem—we mean the prose before us, the deceiver strays through a *world of woods*, where, singular property, *sylvan* shades imbrown the face of day. Moreover, in this same wood, which is so sylvan, he strays in solitude, and that solitude is—lonely. We need scarce tell our unpractised readers that, in poetry, all this is otherwise. Every word there tells, has a meaning, sets an image before you, or at least soothes the ear with some sweet cadence, without pur-

chasing even this charm by an entire inanity of sense. Search the masters through, and you will find them in nothing marked more strongly than by the 'words that burn;' and it must be in a dozing hour indeed of a real poet, that you hear him talk of sylvan woods, or lonely solitudes, or green verdures.

Another thing, which will often furnish you with the means of detecting this prose in disguise is the mode of handling the far-famed *parts of speech*. Poetry, real poetry, either from genius or from long habit, manages these troublesome personages with comparative ease; and notwithstanding the shackles of rhyme, trips along with lightness and grace, under the weight of nouns and pronouns, number and gender, mode and tense. Not so unlucky prose. No sooner does he leave his own domains, and attempt an open or a disguised inroad into his sister's borders, than the mischievous demons of grammar begin to play a thousand wicked pranks upon him. He, good gentleman, not knowing very well who of them belong together and who apart, is imposed upon by their impudence, and allows them to go hobbling along through his verse—singulars with plurals, and present tenses with past ones—and thinks the merry spectators are smiling at his wit instead of his awkwardness. Tested by this scale as by the others we shall find the work before us, to be plain, sad prose. We have 'commerce roll,' for commerce rolls; 'sea encompass,' for sea encompasses; 'Ores embosomed in the earth *was* brought,' and various other weaknesses of the like nature, which show what a silly fellow this Prose is, voluntarily to put on the straight waistcoat of the muses.—To be candid, however, we allow that in falling under the weight of grammar, he falls in noble company. Good plain English grammar, the true old fashioned discipline of noun and verb is, after all, the great *crux* of our draughters of reports, our makers of speeches, and our writers of despatches. Eloquence, style, effect, these are easy matters, and you cannot take up a report on the Seminole war, or a statement of the affairs of the Bank, but you find it as flowery as a May morning. Eloquence, as Mr. Burke says of slavery, is a weed that will grow in any soil; we have a right to say so, who are producing it in every exposure from the Senate down to the dinner table. But, as the white clover cometh in with the strawberry, and it hath been observed that where the first

growth is oak, the second is wild cherry, so it cannot be denied that what the orators have gained among us, the grammarians have lost; that tropes and metaphors have fattened on the nouns and verbs; and a rank, flourishing solecism shot up under many of the most promising plants, in our oratorical gardens. So far has this run, that some charitable persons have cast about for a remedy. And as it is a practice in some foreign Universities for the ingenuous youth, before taking their degree, to employ a veteran under the name of a grinder, to teach them a few phrases of customary Latin, so these benevolent persons have recommended that our eloquent men of the description alluded to should, before appearing in public, employ some competent person to grind a little English into them.

But it is more than time to revert, for the sake of bidding adieu, to the production before us. Our readers may be inclined to find fault with us, for having taken up their time and our own, on a production altogether without merit, and which has no other claim to protection than that of insignificance. This claim we should have allowed, had not the number of similar performances been of late gaining upon us; and did we not think it now and then well to stoop from the gravity of sustained discussion, for the sake of preventing riots and scandals, from getting high in the basement story of the literary edifice. We need not here or ever say, that our severity proceeds from no personal motives, as we never had the happiness of meeting the author's name, but on the title page of the work in question. Whatever may be his claims to respect as a man, of which we know nothing, he certainly has none to indulgence as an author. One embarrassment he has thrown us into; we found an explanation of his poetry as prose disguised: but on reading his notes, we want a new name, lower than prose, for composition without common grammatical correctness, or reasonable propriety in the use of words.

ART. III.—*Discourses on various subjects; by Jeremy Taylor D. D. Chaplain in ordinary to King Charles I, and late Lord Bishop of Down and Connor.* Boston, Wells & Lilly, 3 vols. 8vo, 1816.

SOME years since, it was wished by many of our scholars, that the works of Taylor, Barrow, Bacon, and Hooker, with